

# With The First Nighters

DEWOLF Hopper will begin a three nights' engagement at the Salt Lake theatre on Monday night in "The Better 'Ole," a unique play presented by Mr. and Mrs. Coburn. This is a comedy with music written by Captain Bruce Bairnsfather and Captain Arthur Elliot, based upon Bairnsfather's cartoons. The three leading characters, Old Bill, Bert and Alf, have been brought to life and in their present station afford a great deal more amusement than was possible as mere sketches.

Captain Bairnsfather served at the front during the early stages of the recent war, and it was during the period he spent in the trenches that he drew on paper his impressions. An actual daily occurrence provided the inspiration for each of his sketches, and in constructing the play the authors have selected the most humorous and human episodes. An interesting story is interwoven as a line of continuity. Old Bill, Bert and Alf are three intensely human characters, each of distinct type and individual mannerisms. Their escapades are uproariously funny, but there is an undercurrent of pathos that never fails to humanize an audience.

While in no sense a musical comedy, this unique comedy carries a musical program that is said to aid materially in its success. There are ten catchy numbers, each fitting into the action of the play. There are ensemble numbers as the chorus of female war workers entertains the soldiers, trench tris and ballad solos with a plausible reason for each song.

In his interpretation of Old Bill, chief of the muskrats, Mr. Hopper is said to have achieved the greatest success of his career. Also, he is given credit for the best portrayal of any of the numerous actors who have played the role. An excellent cast is promised for his support. H. Radford Allen will be seen as Bert and Horace Sinclair as Alf.

## WILKES

THE last opportunity for Salt Lakeers to see Miss Marjorie Rambeau, the distinguished actress and Broadway favorite during her special three weeks' engagement, will be presented next week, when Miss Rambeau appears at the Wilkes in "The Fortune Teller," beginning Sunday night.

In "The Fortune Teller," Miss Rambeau rises to heights of characterization that caused New York audiences to extend an ovation on her first appearance in the play and to maintain a steady patronage throughout the long run of the play that indicated its popularity. Miss Rambeau, of all the successes in which she has appeared, likes best "The Fortune Teller." She intends to keep the play in her permanent repertoire, even after some of the other great successes in

which she has scored so heavily have been laid on the shelf.

She will be supported in the Salt Lake presentation, which is the first off Broadway, by Hugh Dillman, Crane Wilbur and an exceptionally fine cast of the Wilkes players. Hugh Dillman, personally, is greatly attached to the play, in which he created the role of the wayward son in New York, for the reason that it was during the New York engagement that he wooed and won Miss Rambeau.

The play is based on the broad and sympathetic theme of mother love, the power of mother love to regenerate, inspire and conquer over circumstances which seem to hold little other than absolute despair. The mother is a cheap fortune teller, following a street carnival and picking up the harvest of dimes paid by yokels for having their fortunes told. As a palmist, she is a fake. Moreover, she is a victim of drugs and liquor. A son, long lost, is in the same village where the street carnival is holding forth, and comes to have his fortune told. He is desperate, on the verge of suicide, when he is recognized by the mother. Through the power of her love, she regenerates the son and her-

self. The story is told in a series of thrilling, gripping scenes and episodes, which make up a play sure to be one of the favorites of her special engagement.

The play will continue all week, with matinees Thursday and Saturday. Immediately following the close of her Salt Lake engagement next Saturday night, Miss Rambeau will go to San Francisco, where a five-weeks' engagement will be played.

## ORPHEUM

AN audience as a rule cannot estimate in dollars and cents the cost of a feature production. Some will guess too high, others will feel that the simple settings and outdoor scenes could not bring the expense over, say, \$10,000. And yet no one would venture to argue with the producer when he says that his picture cost him a quarter of a million dollars. Evidently the producer knows, and nowadays hundreds of thousands of dollars expended on a picture production are not the unusual thing of some years ago.

Take for instance "The Unpardonable Sin," which comes to the Or-

pheum next Monday. Of course the expense of the production is evident, for there are hundreds of scenes that startle with their magnitude. To tell its audiences, however, that during the making of the picture a scene costing exactly \$1,000 and taking up on the screen the period of two seconds would seem a wild exaggeration. And to add zest to the statement, the same scene was cut out after producer, director and star had gone over the production.

Marshall Neilan, the director, looked all over this city for a large velvet drop and finally had to buy one. Velvet costs \$5 a yard, and the drop took up over a hundred yards. Against this drop a close-up of Miss Blanche Sweet was to be taken. The scene in its entirety cost just about \$1,000, and finally was taken out. This is merely an illustration of some expensive items which come up during the making of a picture, and of which the spectator, naturally, has no knowledge.

The preparation for "The Unpardonable Sin" screening took up over three months. Three of the best writers worked on the scenario, each one making his own adaption of Rupert Hughes' astounding story.

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